DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 100 159 FL 006 494

AUTHOR	Berry, J. W.
TITLE	Psychological Aspects of Cultural Pluralism: Unity and Identity Reconsidered.
INSTITUTION	Hawaii Univ., Honolulu. East-West Center.
PUB DATE	Aug 74
NOTE	8p.
JOURNAL CIT	Topics in Culture Learning; v2 p17-22 Aug 1974
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Acculturation; *Biculturalism; *Bilingualism; *Cultural Pluralism; Culture; *Ethnic Groups; Psychological Patterns; Social Integration; Social Problems; Voluntary Integration
IDENTIFIERS	*Canada

ABSTRACT

This paper is a plea for the recognition of the psychological and cultural value of pluralism in a nation. Government policies often discourage cultural pluralism in an attempt to promote national unity, but these policies suppress the individual's need for identity. Group interaction in complex societies may be divided into eight categories: (1) integration or democratic pluralism; (2) paternal integration or inclusive segregation; (3) rejection or self-segregation; (4) exclusive segregation; (5) voluntary assimilation; (6) involuntary assimilation; (7) marginality or segregation of a small group; and (8) deculturation, where apathy or withdrawal negate any cultural characteristics. Canadian government policy promotes the first of these patterns, integration or democratic pluralism. Biculturalism and bilingualism are recognized; cultural pluralism is supported and assimilation discouraged. Thus identity and unity both are maintained. (CK)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ED100159

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Topics in Culture Learning
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL PLURALISM: UNITY AND IDENTITY RECONSIDERED

J. W. BERRY[1]
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
AT KINGSTON

In large and complex nation-states it is rare to find a population which is homogenous. The usual situation is characterized by the existence of two or more distinct groupings recognizable by cultural, racial or other socially distinctive features. This natural state of affairs has been termed pluralism, and is thought by many national leaders to be in conflict with goals of national unity. This paper is a plea for the recognition of the psychological and cultural value of pluralism; it is a plea for the maintenance of diversity within populations during the arduous process of nation-building in Africa, and elsewhere in the Third World.

The bulk of the paper, however, is devoted to laying the ground work for this plea. Firstly it considers the complementary questions of identity and unity, and then outlines a scheme for considering the various modes of relating diverse elements of the population to each other. Finally it outlines a political solution adopted in Canada, examines its possible applicability to other nations, and concludes with the suggestion of the serious consideration of a multiculturalism in various parts of the world.

Unity and Identity

Observers of political and cultural life in many countries have noted a tension between the needs of individuals for a culturally significant identity, and of states for a nationally significant unity (Frye, 1971; Segall, et.al., nd).

On the one hand it is a frequent observation that individuals find it difficult to identify with a massive and monolitic society or state; individual identities are frequently hyphenated. The social fragmentations which serve as objects of identification can be based upon regional, ethnic, linguistic, racial, class, sex or age cleavages. Whatever their basis, and whatever their manifestation, it is not possible to deny the pervasive existence of these divisions. Pan-cultural universals such as this may best be interpreted as being rooted in some general human psychological need (Berry, 1969) and the one postulated here is the need for some relatively small and stable reference and identity group.

On the other hand, national governments frequently attempt to apply policies to the entire population, in the pursuit of national unity. Many of these, of course, may not

FL006494

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

conflict with the individual's need for an identity; however where national policies are directed toward either the control of emerging socio-cultural diversity, or to the elimination of such pre-existing diversity, there is direct conflict between the needs and goals of the individual and the nation-state.

Most nations do not leave the issue of diversity unattended. Some have policies and goals which are designed to permit a large degree of cultural diversity within their borders. Many, however, have adopted policies which restrict internal cultural diversity (see for instance Kuper and Smith, 1971) and it to these, in various parts of the world, that this paper is directed.

Modes of Group Relations in Complex Societies

In this analysis, three questions of psychological significance will be given dichotomous answers. An eight cell scheme thereby emerges, which is necessarily simple but which may be useful in stretching the problem out for more precise and detailed analysis and empirical study; some of this analysis has been discussed in partial form previously (Sommerlad and Berry, 1970; Berry, 1971; Berry, et al., 1971; and Berry and Wilde, 1972).

The first question concerns the persistence of ethnic identity and characteristic cultural features; this question is answered simply "yes" or "no." A second question pertains to the maintenance of positive intergroup relations, including positive attitudes and frequent contact; this question is also answered simply "yes" or "no." The third question is whether the minority groups are permitted the option of answering the first two questions; this too is answered simply "yes" or "no," with the latter response implying that the answer to either of the first two questions are largely imposed by the dominant group(s). The eight patterns of answers are displayed and titled in Figure 1; each pattern

FIGURE 1
Scheme of Modes of Group Relations in Complex Societies
Based Upon Answers to Three Questions

QUESTION 1	QUESTION 2	QUESTION 3	PATTERN	
Retention of Identity?	Positive Relations?	Choice by Ethnic Group?	Number	Name
"YES"	"YES"	"YES"	1	Integration (Democratic Pluralism)
		"NO"	2	Paternal Integration (Inclusive segregation)
	"NO"	"YES"	3	Rejection (Self-segregation)
		"NO"	4	Exclusive Segregation
"NO"	"YES"	"YES"	5	Assimilation 1 (Melting pot)
		"NO"	6	Assimilation 2 (Pressure cooker)
	"NO"	"YES"	7	Marginality
		"NO"	8	Deculturation

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

may be discussed briefly. Note that the terms "integration" and "assimilation," as used in this paper, refer to quite different patterns. At times, over the last 20 years and especially in the United States, the terms have been used interchangeably.

1. Integration (Democratic Pluralism)

In this decision pattern both ethnic retention and positive intergroup relations are valued by the ethnic group(s). The free and regular association of culturally-distinct groups is motivated by some mutual (national) set of goals, which is sufficient to maintain positive relations. Because the choice is free, the individual is not obliged to retain his own ethnicity, but could theoretically move from one group to another. Switzerland is an obvious example of this pattern.

2. Paternal Integration (Inclusive Segregation)

In this decision pattern, the dominant society requires the maintenance of ethnicity, and of positive intergroup relations. The ethnic individual is not entitled to take on either another set of cultural characteristics nor to engage in negative relations with the dominant society. This pattern usually requires an efficient set of social-control agents (e.g. police or passes) for its enforcement. In many respects this pattern can be represented by the emerging pattern in South Africa.

3. Rejection (Self-Segregation)

In the decision pattern, the ethnic group(s) affirm their culture and identity, but deny the usefulness of positive intergroup relations. Among highly acculturated ethnic groups, this pattern is often referred to as "reaffirmation" and is currently exemplified by Red or Black Power movements in North America, Celtic Nationalism in Europe and Négritude in Africa.

4. Exclusive Segretation

This decision pattern was more common a few years ago, when it was legally and economically possible in many countries to forcefully exclude ethnic groups from major participation in society (e.g. United States or pre-War South Africa). Nowadays, either the adoption of more democratic values, or a recognition of the economic value of ethnic groups, has lessened the frequency of this pattern.

5. Assimilation 1 (Melting Pot)

In this decision pattern, ethnic groups decide to merge their identity with the larger society in the pursuit of pervasive and general goals. This pattern may no longer be as widespread as previously, as in the case of Irish immigrants to the United States, but there is still voluntary assimilation in various parts of the world whenever an immigrant group accepts the goals of the new society and is willing to adopt the patterns of the new society to attain the goals.

6. Assimilation 2 (Pressure Cooker)

This decision pattern differs from number five in that the decision to give up one's culture is forced upon ethnic groups by the larger society. Pressure is exerted to bring about assimilation, rather than allowing this decision to the ethnic groups. This pattern is still apparent in Australia in the relation between the White majority and the Aboriginal Australians.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

7. Marginality

In this pattern ethnic groups, apparently without pressure, occupy a position between two cultural systems, belonging to neither and having few positive intergroup contacts. Examples of this pattern are Part-Aborigines in Australia, Metis in Canada, and Anglo-Indians in India; however many are developing a new culture and if successful, may move into patterns one or three (Integration or Rejection).

8. Deculturation

In this pattern, all three questions are answered negatively: no ethnic retention, no positive intergroup relations and no choice in the matter. Although all groups possess a way of life, and thus by definition a culture, this pattern (often referred to as the "culture of poverty") is so unsupportive that the term is not inappropriate. It may come about when marginal groups (pattern seven) cease to have hope or motivation, when the apathy and withdrawal which is so characteristic becomes their dominant feature.

These, then, are the eight possible patterns of group relations when three questions of psychological significance are posed, and when dichotomous answers are provided. They are necessarily based upon a psychological point of view, are necessarily restricted to the three (of many possible) questions asked, and are necessarily simple, (black and white) responses. However, they do serve to spread the issues out for view, and do indeed correspond to a number of actual systems as the examples provided illustrate.

Finally, these eight patterns do illustrate that there is a great variety of patterns possible. These range from those that permit identity (1, 2, 3 and 4), to those that do not (5, 6, 7 and 8); from those that encourage unity (1, 2, 5 and 6), to those that do not (3, 4, 7 and 8); and from those that allow freedom of choice (1, 3, 5 and 7) to those that impose the decisions (2, 4, 6 and 8). If, as value-free social scientists, we could argue on empirical grounds for any one pattern, it is possible many of us would select the pattern which offers us identity, unity and freedom of choice. It is this pattern (Integration or Democratic Pluralism) for which I personally find evidence and with which I am most familiar. It is this pattern which has recently been promoted in a Canadian Government Policy.

Multiculturalism Policy in Canada

In 1963, the Federal Government of Canada established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to "enquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution."

The Official Languages Act of 1968 implemented the major recommendation of the Commission, and in essence gave formal recognition to a linguistic and cultural dualism within a single nation. Following the original guidelines, the Commission also took into account the "Third Force," those other ethnic groups which are so visible in Canada, and prepared a volume entitled "The Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups" (Book IV). In October 1971, the Federal Government brought forward its response to Book IV, known as the "Multiculturalism Policy."

This policy, in essence, declares the dominant mode of cultural relations to be officially, what it had been informally for many years, a pluralism; it is a "policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework." The policy explicitly dismisses

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"assimilation programmes," and seeks "to ensure that Canada's cultural diversity continues." Its motive is also explicit, the government arguing that "ethnic pluralism can help us overcome or prevent the homogenization and depersonalization of mass society." Identity is thus sought, while the erosion of unity is not considered to be a problem; "Canadian identity will not be undermined by multiculturalism -- indeed we believe that cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian identity... Ethnic groups often provide people with a sense of belonging which can make them better able to cope with the rest of society than they would as isolated individuals. Ethnic loyalties need not, and usually do not, detract from wider loyalties to community and country." Finally the freedom of choice is offered to ethnic groups: "Every ethnic group has the right to preserve and develop its own culture, and values within the Canadian context."

These sentiments are being implemented by a four point programme which is very well supported financially. In my own words these programmes are:

1. Assistance (to all Canadian cultural groups who so wish) for the maintenance and development of their own cultures.

2. Efforts to eliminate alienation and feelings of inferiority among these groups, and of prejudice and discrimination towards them among other Canadians.

3. Promotion of integrative social contact among these differentiated groups.

4. Assistance for immigrants to learn either English or French, and other cultural norms necessary for full participation in the larger Canadian society.

This discussion has been detailed, not in order to praise or damn, but to illustrate that a Federal Government, faced with an extremely diverse population (and electorate) can take seriously the possibility of officially encouraging cultural pluralism. At the policy level, it is not a pipe dream -- the policy exists and it is being implemented. However at the population level, its workability and acceptability are still being tested. There is currently a nation-wide acceptance survey in progress among ten selected ethnic groups, particularly with regard to language retention. What is equally important is a parallel study within the "larger society" to assess the acceptability of the policy; so far this has not been done.

Although the multiculturalism policy was not directed specifically toward native peoples in Canada, it may in the long run benefit them the most. A report to the Government of Ontario on Indian Education (Berry et al., 1971) has argued for major institutions (such as education and work structures) which would allow for the maintenance of the "psychological and cultural integrity" of native peoples, while at the same time permitting them to "mesh socio-economically with the larger society." This could be accomplished by allowing, where it is desired, an "Indian educational system" which would articulate with the native child at first grade (usually characterized by a primary socialization into native language and culture), and taking him to a set of goals selected by the native ethnic groups themselves. Work roles would be sought which provided access to the wealth of the country, but which would not require much sacrificing of the valued behavioural and cultural characteristics of the group. Similar arguments, both before and after the ones outlined here, have now led to the establishment of an Indian College in the mid-North. Although its curriculum, and overall goals are not yet firm, there is no doubt that such institutions could not exist in a society with a strong assimilationist ideology.

Pluralism in Other Nations

No assertion will be made here that pluralism will work in all nations. My plea is for serious consideration to be given to the possibility of building the extant cultural diversity into the new national structures.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For instance, the socio-cultural and political level of argument, there is no doubt that many varieties of pluralism are indigenous to Africa (Kuper and Smith 1971, p. 136), and as I have outlined, pluralism is taken seriously and has a good chance of working in some large western states. The question thus arises: why do so many nations seek cultural homogenity?

A common answer is that nations must have unity; however at the psychological level of argument, we have noted that the search for unity need not in all cases significantly reduce identity or freedom of choice. It may be that the former is easier to attain if the two latter are sacrificed; but the questions remain; at what psychological cost is national unity achieved and in the long run will the cost be too great?

FOOTNOTES

[1]An earlier version of this paper was prepared for discussion at the First African Regional Conference of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, Ibadan, Nigeria, April 2 to 6, 1973. Since the author could not attend the conference, the paper was read by Rex Ugorji. For the present version, suggestions as to use of terms in the United States relevant to the author's arguments were made by the editor of this volume, Richard Brislin.

REFERENCES

Berry, J. W. On Cross Cultural Comparability. International Journal of Psychology, 1969, 4, 119-128.

Berry, J. W. Psychological Research in the North, Anthropologica, 1971, 13, 143-157.

Berry, J. W., C. Evans and H. Rawlinson. Post Secondary Educational Opportunity for the Indian Population. Queen's Printer, Toronto, 1971.

Berry, J. W. and G. Wilde, (eds.) Social Psychology: The Canadian Content, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1972.

Frye, N. "Unity and Identity" in The Bush Garden, Anansi, Toronto, 1971.

Government of Canada, Response to Book IV of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1971.

Kuper, L. and M. G. Smith (eds.). Pluralism in Africa, Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1971.

Segall, M., Doornbos, M. and Davis, C. Becoming Ugandan: The Dynamics of Identity in a Multicultural State, unpublished manuscript.

Sommerlad, E. and Berry, J. The role of ethnic identification in distinguishing between attitudes towards assimilation and integration, Human Relations, 1970, 23, 23-29.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TOPICS IN CULTURE LEARNING

Volume 2 1974

Edited by Richard W. Brislin

August 1974

East-West Center
East-West Culture Learning Institute
1777 East-West Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822